

Money not the root of brain drain from developing countries

Money, as the saying goes, may make the world go round but it is not necessarily the most important reason why professionals join the international brain drain.

This unfashionable conclusion is contained in the recently published findings of a multinational comparative survey conducted by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

Family ties, professional considerations and working conditions may be at least as important influences on the decision to stay at home or go abroad.

The *Brain Drain: Emigration and Return*, by Professor William Glaser and Mr Christopher Habers, is a report of the findings of a study of the migration and return of professionals from developing countries who study in developed countries.

It is based on 13 surveys in 11 countries. These include surveys of students from developing countries who were in Canada, France and the United States; surveys of professionals living in developed countries; and surveys of professionals who received their professional education in a developed country; and surveys in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Greece, India, the Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka, of professionals who studied in a developed country and who subsequently, either immediately after study or after a temporary stay abroad, returned to their home country.

What makes the study unique is that the aim of the research has been to discover the motivations and factors that influence the specific choices of these individuals with regard to place of study and subsequent employment.

Taking account of a number of variables such as social origin, class, talent, ability to adjust to social conditions abroad, and income differences between developing and developed countries, this approach adds a new perspective to the "brain drain" debate which has to date mainly centred on economic considerations.

One of the most significant findings of the study is that income differences between the developed and the developing countries is not as

important a consideration in emigration as is generally believed.

Although the authors note that increased salaries abroad are clearly associated with a greater intention to emigrate, the relationship is very tenuous and other influences are often very important.

"Amongst a group of persons—whether students, stay-ons, or returnees from any country—there is a strong tendency for larger income prospects abroad to produce increasing increments in plans to emigrate."

"Many persons are committed to return and remain in developing countries despite the belief they could earn two or three times as much overseas."

Many people return home, for example, to South-East Asia, despite salaries much below the rates in North America, since living standards are adequate at home and since non-monetary reasons push them out of developed countries and pull them back home.

Others can earn more at home, either because pay for foreigners is low in developed countries (such as France and Great Britain) or because high salaries can be found at home (such as Iran, Brazil, and francophone Africa).

If pecuniary differentials alone controlled migration, the authors say, developing countries would have insurmountable problems.

"They would only be able to keep their best professionals by matching the pay levels of developed countries, which would be increasingly unbalanced by heavy cash flow into the salaries of the elite."

It appears, they add, as if adequate salaries rather than very high figures, would be the attractive element to keep most people at home, provided they are accompanied by a variety of non-monetary incentives.

In several countries with low salaries, professionals complain at least as much about jobs that are stifling in their routines and primitive in their facilities.

Better facilities, more opportunities for research, closer communication with new developments overseas, and more assistance would improve the foreign trained professionals' morale as well as his productivity.

In general the report concludes that most students from developing countries plan to return home after study abroad. However, some universities have large proportions who say they plan to emigrate permanently.

At least 30 per cent of the Trinidadians, Haitians, Argentinians, Egyptians, Lebanese and Indians interviewed said this and Colombians and Koreans were also quite close to this figure.

On the other hand, large proportions of Brazilians, Africans, Pakistanis and students from many small countries required intentions to return.

Of those interviewed who trained abroad some nationalities were much more likely than others to have worked outside their mother country before returning home.

Over one-third of the Indians had practical experience abroad, while nearly every Colombian and Brazilian returned went straight home after getting his foreign degree.

The students' survey suggests that up to one quarter of Trinidadian, Tobagonian, Jamaican and Tunisian students who study abroad also contemplate temporary foreign work before returning home.

Plans to return home are strongest in agriculture, business and philosophy, and least in engineering and medicine.

Persons in the arts and journalism seem to become increasingly disenchanted after return and contemplate emigrating again.

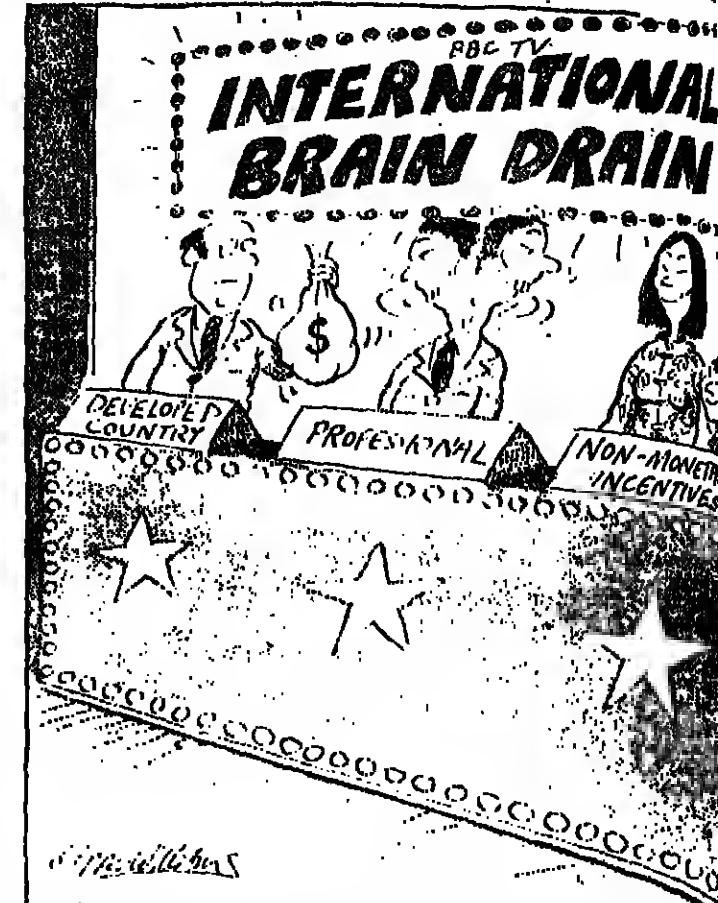
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● A number of highly specialized professions, such as engineers, technicians, engineers, in several technical fields, systems analysts, chemists and physicists.

However, there is no major evidence of developing countries losing all their narrow specialists, only in



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HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

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Three months to answer Mr Oakes' 14 questions

After Mrs Shirley Williams' 13 points, Mr Gordon Oakes' 14 questions. Even after a gap of almost nine years this comparison between the two policy-making exercises is bound to be made. Indeed, the reappearance of some hardly perennial (two-year courses, more part-time students, and a gap between school and higher education) makes the resemblance a little uncanny. For the benefit of the more nervous and the more cynical the discussion document also mentions some even less attractive ideas, like a further reduction of seven per cent in accommodation standards and staff/student ratios and the wholesale employment of temporary academic and other staff.

Without much warning higher education has been precipitated into a debate about its future which is really more important in its sphere than the "Great Debate" was for school education last year. The time available for this debate is frighteningly short. Organizations have been given until the beginning of June to present their considered views. It seems quite out of proportion that only three months should be allocated to the discussion of the fundamental issues raised by Mr Oakes in his 14 questions while the deliberations of the committee examining the management of the public sector of higher education, chaired by the same Mr Oakes, should have extended over a year. Yet there is no choice. The hand of the Treasury is already poised to pencil in a figure for the resources available for higher education in 1982-83, the first year of the peak. The PEBC cycle will soon begin again. If higher education wants to have some say in its next future, it will have to hurry.

It is difficult to exaggerate the need for universities, polytechnics and colleges to respond quickly to Mr Oakes' initiative. The decisions to them in the next six years are all but taken—but these decisions are a mess. On the one hand it seems almost certain that higher education will have to accommodate the student "bump" of the mid-1980s with its present plans. The approval, planning and construction of new buildings takes several years so the only other way would be to rent existing ones—but this is hardly feasible for "green fields" universities because of geography, and for city-centre institutions on grounds of cost.

On the other hand the Government's present policy, contained in the recent public expenditure White Paper, is to allow for an increase in the number of academic staff to match in full the likely increase in students—hence the almost obsessive interest in demography and participation rates. This contrast between capital and current expenditure is the result not of the deliberate and considered policy of the Government but of the different timetables that determine these two forms of spending. Capital expenditure is planned over a longer period and the present level reflects the harsh economic climate that prevailed in 1974 and 1975. Current expenditure has a shorter planning life and so reflects the rather brighter climate of the last two years.

Placental planning, by default, simply cannot continue, as the DES has recognized by publishing *Higher Education into the 1990s*.

But it is equally important that the response of higher education should be both critical and positive. Universities and polytechnics at all costs must avoid being caught in the demography trap that ensnared the colleges of education. They must make it very clear at the beginning of this exercise that in their judgment any connexion between the number of 18-year-olds and demand for higher education is spurious. Whatever else this

present exercise in higher education planning becomes, it must not be allowed to be a rerun of the college of education closures with the new institutes of higher education and even the weaker polytechnics in the role of victims. A technical shift in the participation rate among 18-year-olds can mean the difference between a 14 per cent expansion of higher education and a decline of 11 per cent. This yawning margin of error is made even more alarming when it is remembered that the participation rate has moved in an erratic and unpredictable way over the past 10 years.

The truth, of course, is that demand for higher education is deeply influenced by other Government policies, on employment, on incomes, and—more all—an secondary education which is mentioned only briefly in the discussion document. The case for positive prescriptive planning instead of the essentially descriptive planning that destroyed the colleges of education must be pressed by universities, polytechnics and colleges with all the influence they can command in the coming debate.

But their response to Mr Oakes must also be positive. The consequences of the largely negative response of the universities to Mrs Williams' 13 points in 1969 should be a warning. Many, perhaps most of Mrs Williams' points were unacceptable to the universities, but by and large they failed to propose an alternative strategy. So instead of accepting a clear policy, they were forced to endure an unpleasant erosion of traditional standards that in the long run may have been more damaging, both to the fabric of universities and to their public reputation.

In a similar way higher education may decide that the answers to most of Mr Oakes' 14 questions (for example, the abandonment of the Robbins principle of access must be in the negative. But if nothing concrete is proposed instead, the same fate may overcome the system. There can be little doubt that in the absence of reliable alternatives, the DES, its arm the Council for Education and Training in Social Work, is public knowledge. In your recent editorial you have raised this to the level of a "dispute". There has been no dispute so far. Nor has the council insisted that there must be a precise 1:10 social work staff/student ratio.

In view of the fact that the contents of my letter to the director of October 19th, 1977, seem to have become public knowledge (either the director or I know how), I had better quote exactly what I said: "The council plans to produce a statement before too long arising from a recent enquiry it has undertaken regarding resources in social work courses. In the meantime, the council continues to expect an SST of about 1:10 social work teachers to social work students, though it recognizes that variations will occur but within narrow limits."

I then went on to explain some of the reasons why such variations occur. The council has been forced to maintain this general position because of the dispute which exists between the council and the Posing Committee with whom, it seems, no dialogue is possible. Social work courses have been included since 1971 in the Group 2 faculties, whereas the council has always claimed that they should be in Group 1 faculties, where, for example, health visiting courses and many others which involve the equivalent of laboratory work, are included, and which are treated in the same departments as social work courses in polytechnics and further education colleges. Many efforts have been made by the council, the Joint University Council on Public and Social Administration,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Overseas student quotas

Sir,—We were interested to read the comments made by the dean and members of the faculty of social sciences and humanities at Thames Polytechnic (*THE TIMES*, February 17). It would seem, however, that the overall situation is worse than they suggest. As well as the fundamental moral objections that can be made, the proposal to reduce the number of overseas students to the level of 1975-76 could, contrary to the expressed wishes of Shirley Williams, result not only in a reduction of educational facilities for British students but also in a net loss of revenue to the country. The damage in many regions, though difficult to calculate precisely, could be considerable unless more thought is given to the matter.

In County Cleveland, a large and expanding contribution with only one institution of higher education, the effect of implementing paragraph 7 of Circular 1/77 could lead in the closure of a dozen courses or more—many of which are in the important areas of science, technology and engineering. Such losses would represent a major diminution in the academic facilities of the area.

Worse than this, the loss of educational opportunities for local students would be compounded by an economic loss that would affect the whole area. (Overseas students, as well as contributing to the cultural and social life of the community, are an important group of consumers. Unlike the tourist, visiting for perhaps a month and spending two or three hundred pounds, they are with us for most of the year and spend two or three thousand pounds. The loss of these people as well as the cost of closing courses (contingency payment for staff, unemployment benefit, etc.) makes a nonsense of a policy concerned with economics and efficiency.

The situation facing Teesside Polytechnic and County Cleveland generally, is very serious but it is not unique. However, the little that is said about the problem is all too often simplistic and misleading.

CCETSW's position

Sir,—That there has been an exchange of letters between the director of the Academic Policy Committee and the Posing Committee to change this position. Not only have these efforts been to no avail, but the reasons for the decisions have never been given and there seems to be no mechanism by which a dispute of this type can be considered other than by putting a long written case and receiving a short answer.

The Middlesex Polytechnic has resolved the situation for the time being in ways which are sufficiently satisfactory to the council to avoid the matter rising to the level of a dispute. No doubt the issue will arise again at some time. Most polytechnics have managed so far to rope with the situation by applying the Posing Committee's norms to institutions as a whole rather than to specific courses and in this way have been able to sustain an adequate staffing ratio for social work courses. There is, however, a good deal of evidence to suggest that social work teachers remain among the busiest of polytechnic staffs. The council recognizes that social work education cannot be exempted from the effects of financial constraints with their effects on patterns of teaching but the main argument is about the heavy line against which such constraints should be applied.

"The art of the possible" applies to negotiations between the council and the educational institutions. It knows full well the value of pressure and also the dilemma created for heads of institutions and their academic boards when they are caught between conflicting pressures. Such is the life of senior management, and for one, who, in experience similar pressures, would not have it otherwise.

Yours sincerely,
R. C. WRIGHT,
Assistant Director,
CCETSW.

Redundancy

Sir,—The plight of Eric Srensen, the senior lecturer made redundant because of college of education cutbacks and whose experience of unemployment was starkly demonstrated in *THE TIMES*, February 17 is deserving of every sympathy.

There is however a group of lecturers affected by the college closures whose future may be even more dismal. At least Mr Srensen can expect as compensation a annual payment approaching £3,000. His colleagues under the age of 40, many of whom are equally well qualified and who may have left senior posts in schools to take teacher training can look forward to compensation of less than £1,000.

For such lecturers Crombie's comment cannot be, as Simon Midgley writes, "a satisfactory economic safeguard". They too are facing the difficulty of acquiring alternative posts, of a similar status or otherwise, in a highly competitive and diminishing market.

Should the younger lecturers employed by an education authority be engaged enough to offer a guarantee of employment then the future may well be a few degrees brighter than that of Mr Srensen.

Yours sincerely,
R. W. HARTLEY,
10, GEORGE
R. HARTLEY,
Fulton Hall College of Education,
Nottinghamshire.

Sir,—I note with sympathy Dr Srensen's personal difficulties as a result of the national reductions in teacher training. I am sure that he will be in a similar position at the end of this academic year when my college closes.

However, my redundancy terms should not complain for the pension is to be received for 15 years. People who leave at A levels as well as mature and part-time students who will never gain entry to university—this is the plight of our students, not also products of the 1960s and 1970s. They must be compensated somehow.

Students in teacher training of the past three years who were employed by us to join the police service, for example, have been extremely difficult. They have been trained to meet a range of teaching skills but which they are not opportunities to put them in practice.

Simply their plight is worse than that of Mr Srensen. At least he has a pension. Redundant teachers may be able to cash in on life, at least we can live in relative comfort. These students may never have the chance to work at all, let alone realise a satisfactory future. What compensation do they have compared with what they look forward to?

Yours faithfully,
Y. A. DIXON,
Dean of Winton Senior Lecturer,
Saint Peter's College,
Salford, Birmingham.

Buckingham graduates

Sir,—You reported last week that more than a third of the 1,000 students at the University College of Buckingham have failed to graduate. This statement is misleading. Only five of the original 60 actually failed the examination and even they have the chance to re-sit. The remainder are either taking extension courses or were obliged to interrupt their studies during illness, military service or other reasons.

It is surely more accurate to relate the very positive achievement of the first class and upper thirds. Our external examiners, drawn from eight universities, were certainly impressed by standards our students achieved so early a stage in the college's development.

Yours faithfully,
LAURANCE WILSON,
Registrar,
The University College of Buckingham.

Universities and the future of Britain

by William Wallace

The universities can adapt and economise. But there are certain jobs they need to do that cost money. Producing an extra 4,000 biologists a year would be cheaper than the present 4,000 doctors and dentists but hardly as contributing to the nation's health. An additional 8,000 librarians would clearly cost less than the present 3,000 engineers and technologists, but would do little for the future of the British industry, however much they might do for its past. And doctors, dentists, engineers and technologists educated on a half load of out-of-date equipment would be only slightly less disastrous. So too with research: energy cannot be bought from the waves or heat from the sun on a broken shoe-string budget.

The point is that, in social and economic terms, the universities are more than just conspirators. They are not instruments of social and economic policy; but they do have impact. It is to assist the British of the future, then, that the whole university system must be reorganised and restructured. At the end of November last, the Secretary of State for Education and Science announced a plan for the universities of 310,000 students in Great Britain by 1981-82, a figure that looks likely to be 30,000 short of the actual student demand; it might be reached and probably exceeded. Given proper funding, it is particularly appropriate in the universities' capabilities.

However, it is also a figure that the universities will simply be unable to reach with the sums provisionally indicated since 1980-81. Unless the prospective expenditure is increased by up to 15 per cent, there are not enough people in the labour force, as well as mature and part-time students who will never gain entry to university—this is the plight of our students, not also products of the 1960s and 1970s. They must be compensated somehow.

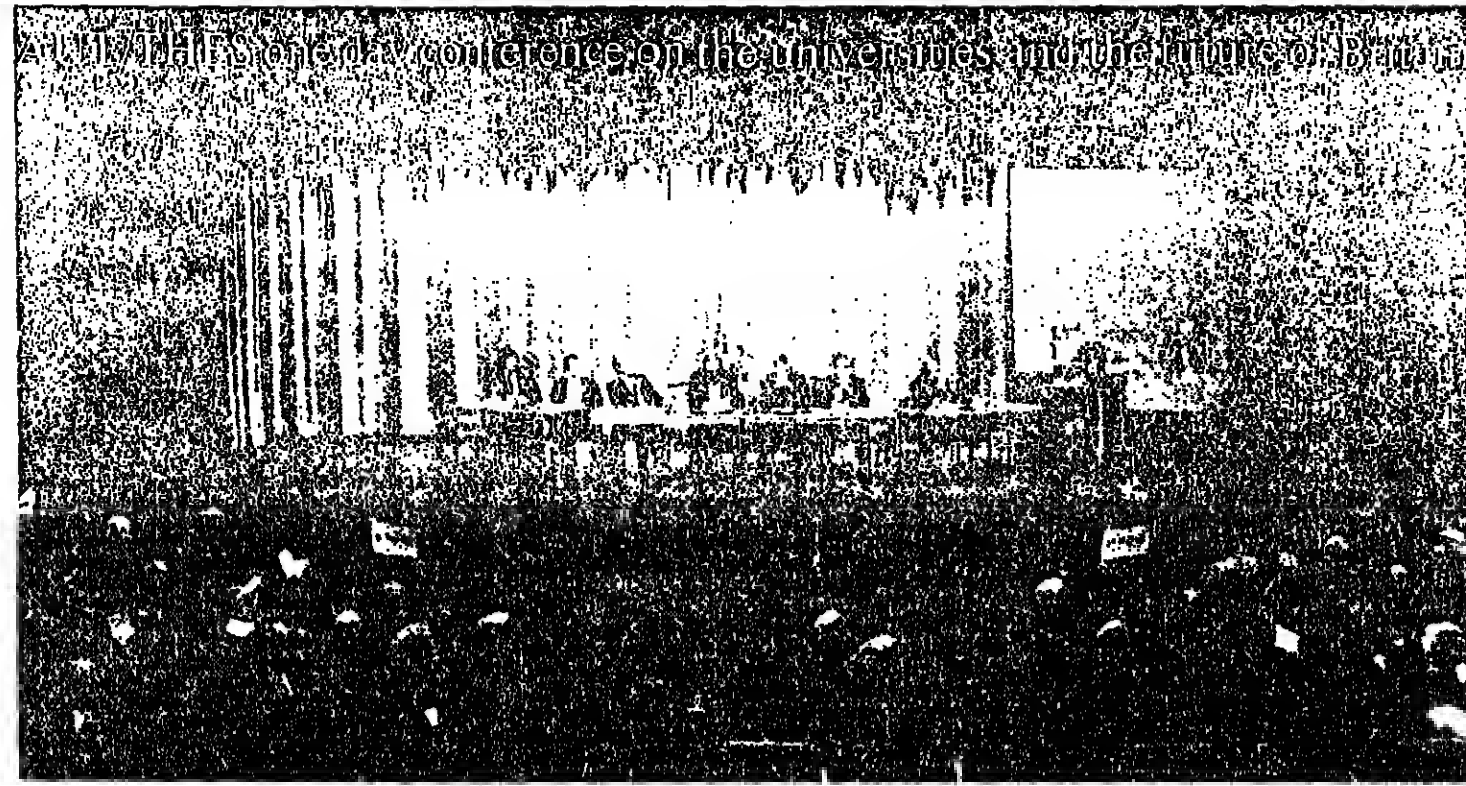
The Government is right to raise the risk of students in all subjects. It must pay for their training. The announcement made in mid-January by the Minister of State that new levels of grant are currently being prepared, calculated for the 310,000 target, is therefore very welcome. Everyone must hope that the levels eventually agreed will prove just as satisfying.

An alternative that has been canvassed for the years ahead is "unlearning through". Britain's demographic development demands that the crude number of 18-year-olds will go on increasing till about 1982-83 and then begin to decline and a possible urban shortage in the 1990s. Since the argument runs, the proportion of 18-year-olds entering universities is not likely to increase, what is necessary between the late 1970s and the late 1980s is a holding operation. The universities can enrol larger numbers of students, but they must be able to absorb them without a proportionate rise in their finances. They can "tunnel through" and not emerge enlarged into the trough at the other end. It is an attractive proposition.

Nevertheless, it is as false as it is short-sighted. Among social groups one and two, which currently supply a majority of university entrants, this age-band is demographically certain to hold up. In general, too, the proportion entering universities has been increasing and is likely to go on doing so. The benefits expected of comprehensive education should themselves be sufficient to ensure this. More children from the other social groups will rise through the system to A levels; and with the likely introduction of the new N and F system, more of them will meet the necessary entrance requirements.

On present showing, the proportion of 18-year-old women electing for the universities seems likely to go on growing. And given prospective social policies, the percentage of 18-year-olds entering universities to be introduced to engineering and technology, the very nature of the N and F-level system will also necessitate increasing the length of some degree courses, which will raise the numbers attending universities as distinct from those entering.

In our case, it is backward-looking to confine the argument to youngsters. Quite apart from institutions such as the Open University and Birkbeck College whose raison d'être is the part-time education of mature students, most conventional universities now take a higher proportion of older undergraduates than 10 years ago. It is precisely in the 1980s that the first Robbins era graduates will reach their forties and stand in need of educational resourcing. And the change in demographic balance between the school leaving and consensually older cohorts may



The conference was held at the Institute of Education, London, on Thursday, February 23.

well demand some quite extensive re-orientation of the middle-aged.

Supposing, however, that the unlikely materialised and the hump did come to an end, it would still and there been thousands of money in the labour force, but as the universities' own demographic trends, And it is just when the "tunnellers" imagine that the lump will start to pass that academic staff appointments in the years after the war will begin to realize. It is perhaps about the same time that many senior university buildings will require to be pensioned off. So if a financial cut-back were then required, it could be achieved in a relatively painless way.

The government, of course, has its immediate problems; and it is difficult for it to make long-term commitments. But the issue should not really be viewed as a passing fancy. The universities' own demographic trends, their beneficiaries, and the involved community thinking together to maximise the contribution the universities can make to Britain's long-term future, starting now.

Whatever the answer, the universities will bring a return. It will also ensure the kind of society we live in and enrich the heritage we leave behind.

There are signs that the government and others are coming to appreciate this. It is therefore not unreasonable to suggest ways in which the universities might be used to indicate how the expansion of the Robbins plan might be continued and consolidated, and how it might be accompanied by a measure of reorientation.

Highly skilled manpower will remain a major university product. To some professions there may be a considerable need to change the essential character of the education provided. Yet, through organising degrees in nursing or ophthalmology, some universities have already done pioneering work in what may be used to be a much expanded, university-based para-medical profession.

Then again, it may be that, on their own, in co-operation with their opposite numbers, British universities will have to develop the teaching of European law such more extensively than they have yet imagined. It is also not fanciful to suggest that universities may soon find it essential to include language teaching in the education of all professionals so that they may be able to compete for EEC jobs.

In at least some cases, therefore, there may be a strong argument for extending the undergraduate course by one or two years (as well as for expanding the exchange of university staff abroad). And as several university-industry schemes, backed by the UCC, are proving, the number of cases may be multiplied by the need for more scientists to be trained in management, accountancy, law and industrial relations (an area where the universities have a comparative advantage) and for more social scientists to be introduced to engineering and technology.

But the argument needs to be considered at a higher level. The usefulness of a doctorate for subsequent employment in industry and agriculture is sometimes questioned. At the end of the day it remains true that launching graduates in a place of independent research is a first-class way not only of whetting their appetites for later commercial research but also of producing a great many of immediate value.

On the other hand, to develop more taught courses at the master's or even the doctor's level, to produce more doctors, to produce more engineers, to produce more scientists, to produce more social scientists, to produce more economists, to produce more lawyers, to produce more accountants, to produce more managers, to produce more technologists, to produce more librarians, to produce more teachers, to produce more nurses, to produce more ophthalmologists, to produce more dentists, to produce more doctors, to produce more scientists, to produce more engineers, to produce more accountants, to produce more managers, to produce more technologists, to produce more librarians, to produce more teachers, to produce more nurses, to produce more ophthalmologists, to produce more dentists, to produce more doctors, to produce more scientists, to produce more engineers, to produce more accountants, to produce more managers, to produce more technologists, to produce more librarians, to produce more 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mother, rather significant, change consists in the management of departments. If our university is at all typical, perinatal leadership is on the way towards losing the exception and there is a growth trend towards a more collegial approach with the head of department controlling the department.



What we r

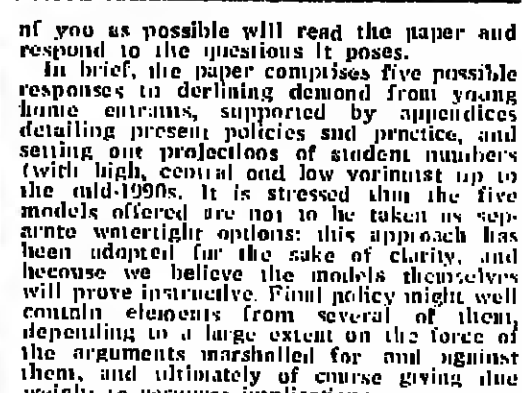
When Lord Keynes published his *General Theory of Employment* over 40 years ago, he said in his preface that "it is my fellow economists, not the general public, whom I must first convince". It isn't hard to verify that some of the beliefs which dominate economic policy today were first ad-

While the utilitarian argument for universities is a large part of our case, I am not convinced that we should make it the whole of our case, and I am even more doubtful whether the outside world respects us when we do.

and the same thought must sometimes arise in the mind of a research worker in industry. It is the privilege of the university that he never has to suppress the creative part of himself, and I believe that it is both morally and practically important for Britain's future that this should go on being true.

bo affecting secondary schools, and it will be the turn of IIE in the early 1980s. Perhaps one of the strangest aspects of

Education and research deserve the lion's share of investment from our North Sea bonus strictly on their own merits



policy

Together, these factors—the need to sustain the momentum of essential technological advance, and the need to accommodate ourselves to the considerable social change it brings in its train—make up a great part of the challenge we face, but they also hold out the prospect of the rewards which can be won in the search for the best ways of meeting the challenge and harvesting the gains.

What we need is an independent forum for

Secondly, universities are centers of research, particularly in the natural sciences but also, of course, in the social sciences and humanities, as well. On a perhaps fanciful and even futurological plane, the American sociologist, Daniel Bell, in his vision of the future which he calls the post-industrial society, sees "knowledge" as the broadest sense of the word. In its

We should also remember, particularly at
times when we have got rather over-heated
about Marxist infiltration or similarly pei-
nitive complaints, that universities are also in-
stitutions for free intellectual enquiry where
alternative lines of thought to the prevailing
orthodoxy in society can be developed. We
should never overlook the value of universi-

ars, I remain an optimist. I do not believe that financial support for the universities has been reduced to a critical level yet, but could happen and that they would no longer be in a position to serve society as they should. The second reason is that if the image of suicide opinion seems hostile, universities may lapse into a kind of cultural pessimism and see themselves as victims.

the sophisticated analysis of HE policy

The trouble is not simply that we have been unable to achieve any kind of synthesis about the changes that higher education and the universities have experienced in the last 10 or 15 years, but we do not even have the institutions, or the forum, in which the attempt to achieve such a synthesis can be made. In fact the traditional institutions for

Indeed, it is precisely because the constitutional arrangement for the financing and direction of the universities are so anomalous—and rightly so—and as a result the inhibitions so great that the case for a policy institute for higher education is so powerful. As a practical footnote, it is clear that when a maintained higher education committee is established following the report of Mr Oakes' committee, the pressures to coordinate the total system of higher education will become greater.

But, what I have in mind is not a slavish imitation of American models. For a more and higher education policy Institute would have to have the support, financial as well as moral, of the Government and the public. I have to begin in an particular area, to borrow a phrase from the SRC — "timeliness and merit". Like demography and the graduate labour market. It would have to walk the middle ground between being a talking-shop and being a think-tank.

However, I do believe it could work. It could help us to break the communication blockage and to break out of the policy sclerosis that seems to afflict higher education and the universities but in a way

One of the areas of change with the biggest potential for imaginative development is probably in that ill-defined force referred to variously as adult education, continuing or recurrent education, or just opportunity for learning. Students appear to have a more precise idea of this kind of education than the distance work in this general field has to travel before it can be regarded as having a clear identity of its own.

If it were not for the need for convenience of reference, it would be more accurate to refer to it in terms of the needs of the citizens, both actual and potential; these are indeed extraordinarily varied, and the provision that has grown up to cater for many of these needs is similarly diverse, making it

continued overleaf

continued overleaf

BOOKS

Energy flow

Energy and the Living Cell: an Introduction to Bioenergetics
by Wayne M. Becker
Blackwell Scientific, 6.00
ISBN 0 397 47368 0

Cell Biology (second edition)
by E. J. Ambrose and D. M. Easty
Nelson, £5.95
ISBN 0 17 771033 0

Cell Membranes and Ion Transport
by J. L. Hall and D. A. Baker
Longman, £3.50
ISBN 582 44192 7

Although all these books claim to be either introductory or suitable for introductory courses they really represent the expertise of the range of books now being aimed at the undergraduate market. Only one is a true introductory text in the sense that it is trying to introduce a subject area, bioenergetics, that students may not have met before or may not have recognized as a coherent body of knowledge. The second is a standard textbook in cell biology and aims at providing the student with the fundamentals of this expanding area. It is a very useful book for those who need some understanding of cellular processes without going very deeply into particular topics.

The third book, on the other hand, deals with a strictly limited subject area and needs some background knowledge to be understood. It is one of a series, a new type of student text that has become very popular. These are short, inexpensive paperback books, covering very specialized and not necessarily related topics, and usually written by a well-known expert. They are becoming a serious challenge to standard textbooks as the student or teacher can choose a number of them and produce his own textbook to suit his individual needs.

Becker's book is an introduction to bioenergetics and brings together a wide range of material that should make it very useful for anyone studying the subject. The first part deals with energy flow in matter generally and in biological processes, specifically, and includes a rather elementary account of enzyme analysis. The second part gives an account of energy sources and deals with metabolic and aerobic energy metabolism, fats and proteins as alternative energy sources, and photosynthesis. In the final section Becker considers the manner in which the cell utilizes energy. Bioenergetics is illustrated by the synthesis of nucleic acids such as glucose and nucleic acids and their synthesis. A detailed account of protein synthesis is given, and the manner in which transport across membranes and mechanical work is explained by reference to muscles and flagellae.

Although much of the information can be found in most biochemistry or cell biology textbooks, particularly the detailed accounts of metabolic pathways, the manner in which it is presented and related to energy makes it a valuable undergraduate text. Explanatory diagrams are fully used and at the end of each chapter there is a series of

problems with the answers in an appendix.

Cell Biology first appeared in 1970 and this second edition has been substantially updated. It is divided into five parts, covering an introduction to the subject, the structure and function of cellular components, the cell cycle and elementary genetics, developmental aspects of cell biology, and the biology of viruses and bacteria. This edition has been expanded to include those areas where recent advances have been most rapid. In the chapters on the cell surface, for example, new sections have been added on techniques for studying cell surfaces, the dynamic nature of cell surface organization, and the fluid mosaic model of cellular membranes. This model would appear to be one of the most popular in biology at present as Singer and Nicolson's diagram of it is the only common feature of all three books.

The chapters on developmental biology have also been expanded with new sections on the relationship between genetics and development, cellular interactions at later stages of development, and the development of plants, which should make the book more acceptable to biologists. Other topical subjects include: reverse transcription, the autonomic nervous system and neuroendocrine, human genetics, and a consideration of the use of models in aid of understanding the functioning of macromolecules. The integration of structure and function is emphasized throughout the book, and its only real weakness when compared to its many rivals is the lack of original micrographs and the quality of those that are used. However, its low price makes it an excellent value for money.

Hall and Baker's book is the second volume in the series, "Integrated Themes in Biology". The first volume on bioenergetics by Dennis Pitt set a very high standard which is maintained in this new book. It describes the structure and composition of cellular membranes and the passage of ions across them and although it claims to be an introductory text it is more likely to be used by final-year undergraduates and postgraduates who already have some familiarity with the subject.

The opening chapter deals with membrane structure and gives brief accounts of membrane proteins and lipids, their arrangement in the membrane and ion transport. This serves as an introduction to the main theme of the book which is an analysis of the forces involved in the transport of ions. The kinetics and thermodynamics of ion transport are presented in a straightforward, mathematical manner, and the principles governing these processes are explained. Passive movement and ion selectivity are considered with accounts of permeability, carriers, ionophores, and membrane versus cytoplasmic selection, as well as a transport linked to metabolism with descriptions of the sources of energy, ATP-driven transport and the sodium pump. The final chapter illustrates these principles and concepts by a detailed analysis of two specific transport systems, ion transport in plant cells and the cotransport of organic solutes with sodium ions in animal cells.

D. J. Beadle

Cryptic mastery

An Introduction to Stochastic Processes with special reference to methods and applications (third edition)
by M. S. Bartlett
Cambridge University Press, £12.50
ISBN 0 521 21585 1

The theory of probability deals with calculations about uncertainty and is now widely recognized as an increasingly rich and practically important topic. A portion of that subject deals with evolving systems governed by probabilistic laws: such systems are called stochastic processes.

The study of these began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with such investigations as Markov's statistical examination of Pushkin's works, some aspects of the kinetic theory of gases, calculation of the probability of extinction of a surname via the descendants of a given individual, Einstein's theoretical study of Brownian motion, and Erlang's theory of congestion in telephone exchanges. In the 1930s the mathematical basis for a general theory of stochastic processes was laid but it is only more recently that the full depth of the theory and the breadth of the potential applications have been realized. These developments are one facet of an appreciation that advanced mathematical ideas can be applied in many fields other than the physical sciences, important though the latter applications remain.

Mathematical education is typically very conservative in content, largely no doubt because of the highly specialized form of most modern mathematics. Stochastic processes are one field where material has passed in 20 years from research literature into the second and third-year undergraduate syllabus in many institutions.

Professor Bartlett was one of the first workers in the United Kingdom to see the interest and importance of the subject and he has had a major influence on its development, having contributed concepts and techniques of wide importance. When the first edition of this book appeared in 1953 it was the only book on the applied mathematics of the subject and at all levels of mathematical elaboration, Bartlett's remains unique in breadth and postscript. Although called an introduction, it is never was, and is not, an easy book to read. It is, though, a book to return to over the years, always with admiration for the author's cryptic mastery and insight. It is thus a book for the research worker and university teacher.

The present third edition differs from the second (1966) by the addition of about 10 new portions on recent developments. These range from some new material on diffusion processes to some aspects of models for spatial processes arising in physics and biology.

D. R. Cox

Man-made fibres

Formation of Synthetic Fibres
by Zbigniew K. Walczak
Gordon and Breach, £19.70
ISBN 0 677 04490 9

Robert Hooke, discussing in 1662 upon the vital functions of the alluring, was probably the first to speculate that "an artificial character composition" might be discovered from which it would certainly be possible to find very quick ways of drawing it into small wires for use.

The successful large-scale realization of this vision occurred more than 200 years later with the emergence of the rayon industry which transformed woodpulp cellulose into man-made fibres, and thereby, for the first time, released humanity's need for textiles from total dependence upon fibres of plant and animal origin. The social and economic consequences of these advances—and of the discovery and introduction from the 1930s onwards of the wholly synthetic nylon, polyester, acrylic and polyamide fibres—has been profound. Yet while man-made fibres are often regarded as a triumph of twentieth-century science, the complex physical technologies of fibre-formation were originally devised, of necessity, on a wholly empirical basis by the joint efforts of chemists and engineers, and despite much refinement and development they remain appreciably so to this day.

Expressed in present-day terms, Hooke's "vase matter" comprises the transformation of a polymeric substance from the bulk state first in a fluid condition, either as a solution or a melt, and thence by extrusion, stretching, and subsequent processes, in a filamentary form with the molecules permanently aligned along the fibre axis, and with desired dimensions

and properties that can be reliably and uniformly on periods of continuous manufacturing operation, in the presence of environmental use.

Although an accurate molecular chemistry of the fibre-forming process has existed for a long time, and its relation to the mechanical properties of fibres has been known only in recent years, the book by Walczak (Gordon and Breach, 1970), now in the United States, follows closely upon Zbigniew Walczak's *Formation of Fibre* (Wiley, 1970).

The author's attention is directed upon the concepts of fibre-forming processes. The main theoretical considerations are the crystalline, non-crystalline, and the problems of heat, mass transport, the complex variables (time, space, and temperature), and the various functional aspects of fibre-forming processes, such as cross-section, density, and cross-section.

The book is directed at the identification and control of the fundamental physical aspects of spinning technology, and therefore not greatly concerned with the engineering details of forming systems or with the materials as chemical entities. The author's tone is one of admirably objective and concise, which is welcome in a technical text of this kind.

Isaac Gel

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Memphur, Memphany and the Typology of Modern Literature
David Lodge

This study confronts some of the fundamental questions of literary criticism and achieves a bold and original synthesis of Anglo-American and European critical approaches to literature. These are applied to a wide range of literary texts and the result is a fascinating and readable book, accessible to anyone with a serious interest in modern literature. "... a bold, incisive essay which, with admirable lucidity, offers its readers a brilliantly honest and deftly applied analytical tool. It should be widely read." —*Times Literary Supplement* Cloth £9.50

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Brian Way
Studies in English Literature 69
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J. Q. Smith

Elementary probability

Probability and Statistics
by A. M. Mood and P. N. Nabbs
Macmillan, £4.95
ISBN 0 333 19056 4

This is yet another introduction to probability and statistics for social science, science and engineering students not specializing in mathematics. It deals with some elementary probability theory giving many examples of discrete and continuous probability distributions. This takes up more than half the book. The remainder includes a fairly extensive treatment of hypothesis testing, a few nonpara-

metric tests, sections on regression and analysis of variance, and finally some of the more common statistical tables.

It is lucidly written and technically competent (which is more than can be said for some of its competitors) and is illustrated with many examples and exercises with answers at the end of the book. But, although it is an above-average book of its kind, it has very little extra to offer than many similar texts. The setting out seems to be a true-to-life introduction to elementary measures in the early pages.

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BOOKS

The critics' poet



Gerard Manley Hopkins aged 15.

In Extremity: A Study of Gerard Manley Hopkins
by John Robinson
Cambridge University Press, £6.90
ISBN 0 521 21690 7

The Language of Gerard Manley Hopkins
by James Milroy
Andre Deutsch, £7.95
ISBN 0 233 96916 0

In *New Bearings in English Poetry* Leavis wrote that "for our time and the future" Hopkins would be the only "influential" Victorian poet. Forty or so years after, it would be possible to claim that just as Hopkins wrote as if Victorian poetry did not exist, twentieth-century poetry goes on almost oblivious of his great but narrow genius. Yeats, Eliot, Pound, the reverberations are still with us. Hopkins, who ought to take his place with the poets who created modern poetry, is far less strongly in evidence.

But what his poetry has done is to provoke, since the 1930s, some of the most brilliant and influential twentieth-century criticism. Whether one turns to Leavis himself, to Empson, Winters, Davies, Hillis Miller, or to the specialist critics of Hopkins, one finds that they write with a sharp sense that his poetry presses upon them the issues of modern criticism, particularly the problems of the poetic imagination and the language of poetry. Each of the books under review makes a contribution to these themes.

John Robinson's biographical argument is sensible but is lodged in, rather than fused with, his discriminating critical study of Hopkins's poetry and ideas. Hopkins was neither born between the war-time of priest and poet nor was he a Jesuit, but it was necessary to him to live at all times in extremity. The best chapters are on Hopkins's language, and on *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, which perfectly discusses the power of that poem and its disturbing lapses into frigid formalism.

I wish that Robinson had connected this coldness with the argument of his book. It is now the fullest account there is

of Hopkins's use of language. He advises the linguistic inventiveness of the poetry so much that he does not let his own poetry show its own and its book shows the rather mechanical and unoriginal tendency of some of the contributions to the *Deutscher Language Library* series, but it is a valuable contribution to Hopkins studies. The first section is a fascinating and concise account of the immense scholarly excitement about language and its history in Hopkins's day and defines against it his pursuit, his interest in dialect, and his conception of "current language" as speech, not the fixed norms of nineteenth-century prose.

The second section, which is a carefully detailed linguistic account of Hopkins's devices for heightening current language, provokes more questions, Hopkins, he says, did not transfer speech directly to his poetry but first examined the norms of his style from it and then put certain of its elements in the foreground, but the almost sensory rush or press of words to the surface of a Hopkins poem makes it difficult to see in practice which elements take precedence over others, and so the foregrounding argument is unhelpful. Again, if Hopkins's "speech" is an abstraction from heightened or rhetorical conversation, it combines his form and structure in ways unknown to speech and therefore has the most tenuous relation with it. In the same way, it is not a particular dialect by the abstraction, dialect, a paradigm that never was, that fascinates Hopkins. His collector's interest, for instance, in words ending in -le with a primitive, contemporary feel to them—sickle, griddle, dapple, supple—results in an eclectic, artificial purism which is really the reverse of what it is: a kind of misanthropic preoccupation with not being careful.

Isobel Armstrong

The voice in the wind

The Poetry of Tennyson
by Dwight A. Culter
Yale University Press, £10.80
ISBN 0 300 020 848

Professor Culter brings to Tennyson studies wide and easy learning, a personal of the new materials, and a fresh sharp eye for individual poems. After reading Culter's early pages I was enlightened and attracted. The scholar's double perspective is so beautifully managed that we lose a sense of the duality. The book moves easily from the backgrounds of intellectual thought to the literary and biographical context, to the sources in Romanticism and Tennyson's broader reading, to the sounds and words, and to sounds which take us beyond words.

For instance, the critical concern is with Tennyson's implicit or explicit subject of the poet's poetry, and he guides us through the poems and their changing context, neither obtrusively nor obscurely. The grey magic on the height in "Merlin and the Gleam" may be Swinburne or Zola or a more generalized invocation of the marvellous modern magic, but the poem is read, in itself and in its time, with sense and proportion. Lucrèce in "Lucrèce" is the rationalist horrified by an obscene discovery of neglected irrational force, and is appreciated in context: "Too much Mili, Tennyson seems to be saying, has given us Swinburne." Too much of the spirit of 1832 has produced the spirit of 1867. The context is derived from the poem whose imagery of civil war and modern life obviously to Culture and Anarchy and Shogun, Niagara. An apparently small but actually huge change of mind

over the word "duty" takes on new meaning in the analysis of words and years. This is poetry with a history.

Culter's learning rests lightly on his reader. He writes in a personal, often amusing, and always varied style, with a full sense of address. He starts with Tennyson's meditations on the word, perhaps precociously foreshadowed at the age of five when he stretched out his arms, declaimed, "I hear a voice that is speaking in the wind", and felt moved to applaud, "I thought it grand". The voice in the wind continued to speak its words and music, in the poet's own name, in cantabulos which induced a state of trance, or in repeated phrases like "For, far away", "No more", and "The Reason of the past". Words are lyrically dealt on in revivals of memory, stirrings of vision, and nomenclature movements away from the poem to the unseen in what William Wordsworth was to place fully in the lower order of mystical experience.

Culter traces the self-conscious theme in many ways, whether in the early brilliant fragment of Elizabethan drama "The Devil and the Lady" where articulate energy and the confusion of the poet's contribution, their passions, in the clever salvage of the prize poem "Timbuctoo", or the major poetry. He traces the powers of the poet through each stage of development, but is especially interesting on what he calls the English idylls. (Idyll gets its English second "I" when it is Tennyson's word and not Culter's). He places them between what he calls the nostalgia and melancholy of youth and the complacency of middle age, appreciates their subtlety, complexity, and moderation,

and delights in the golden light and rich bloom with which they render the everyday subjects of middle-class and middle-class experience. He excellently analyses the social and personal mixtures of "In Memoriam" and "Maud". He makes a very useful distinction between monodrama and dramatic monologues, showing how Tennyson's monodramas are explorations of particular mind and passion, not ironic games played with the reader. He writes perceptively on the short lyrics, especially well on the "Flower in the crannied wall" and the incantatory utterances and cries of "Break, break, break" where, he tells us, we must not "reify" the waves, but let them remain a purely verbal utterance. He is good on the "Ode" and the central lyric "The Ode" and the central lyric "The Ode" and the central lyric "The Ode". He calls these poems civil and the poem's movement. He calls "In the Valley of the Caunterez" a poem of perfect (why not perfect?) and his analysis of sound and symbol is precisely technical and fully sensible.

Finally, Culter is excellent on the great poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade", dedications, and thank you letters in which he appreciates Tennyson's combinations of consummate art and genuine feeling, social good-manners and affections, the social occasion with the longer them. He calls these poems civil and civilized and we might praise the tact, clarity, and warmth of his book in similar terms. It is sufficiently clear and full to make a good introduction, and sufficiently new in use of materials, speculation, and analysis to alert and inform the most jaded Tennysonian.

Barbara Hardy

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Provocative thesis

The English Language in Medieval Literature
by **N. F. Blake**
Dent, £7.95
ISBN 0 460 10273 7

In this book Professor Blake sets out to correct some modern reading habits and attitudes to language which impede understanding of medieval literature.

He argues that in comparison with modern English, the two important features of medieval English are the lack of tradition and the lack of precision, both caused by the absence of formal instruction in the language. Words remained less clearly defined than now and being unable to acquire connotative force through literary reference remained as vague stylistic counters instead of carrying localized associations and meanings.

The predominantly negative tone of this approach pervades the whole book, which is unfortunate in a work obviously intended to be useful to beginners in medieval studies. Thus the chapter on parody attempts to persuade us that there is no parody in medieval English literature, the chapter on word-play that there is very little word-play. Although told that there are different 'advantages and pleasures' to be discovered in medieval literature, we remain on the threshold of discovering what they are, or how linguistic study can uncover them. Comments on critical procedures similarly often take the form of proposals for extension—for example, of the terms 'conspicuous' and 'speech rhythms' (which are, very oddly, more or less equated with each other).

The chapter on rhymes, which Professor Blake thinks are the most important components of medieval poetry, is more positive in approach. Theories in this sense are similar in spirit, but more widely defined. It is argued, sensibly, that the content of individual rhymes is less important than their overall tone and their structural role in a work, and there are some fruitful applications of this argument, especially in the comments on Gower.

There are many other sensible correctives to the excesses and oddities of medieval criticism scattered throughout this book, but the general argument too often rests on dubious evidence. For example, in support of the claim that medieval writers aimed at elevating style and imitating the sophistication of French courtly literature, but not in exploiting local suggestions, the French translation of Parolement of English is credited with the observation that he 'cannot understand the sentiment' of his French author.

He tells us that of sentiment, I understand enough by context. No word he says me to here.

'He used the words, but he did not appreciate their full significance' is the comment. It is not clear precisely what Professor Blake means by 'sentiment', but it is clear that what the poet means is 'personal experience, feeling' (OED sense 1). He is not referring to French words of exotic flavour and doubtful meaning, but contrasting first-hand experience with second-hand report. Further, we are helped to understand the author's meaning by the fact that the words 'sentiment' and 'emotion' have very strong connotations of their own; they are Chaucerian words used to express a Chaucerian relationship to the experience of love. One could deduce from these lines alone that the poem is a fifteenth-century romance written under Chaucer's influence. As this book points out, it is not the lack of language that many a critical blunder bursts.

The corrective process is therefore as much applicable to this book as embodied in it. But its provocative thesis will undoubtedly provide food for argument, and in its range of examples and topics it offers many shrewd comments on aspects of language and literature.

Jill Mann

BOOKS

Dramatic context

The Lear World: A Study of King Lear in its Dramatic Context
by **John Rebetanz**
Heinemann, £6.80
ISBN 0 435 18770 8

John Rebetanz justifies contributing yet another study of King Lear to the growing shelves of Shakespeare criticism on the grounds that his approach is original, as indeed it is. Instead of relating the play to other works written by Shakespeare at different stages of his career, Rebetanz studies it in the context of the non-Shakespearean drama of its time, assuming that 'the dramatic traditions and conventions available to Shakespeare when he wrote King Lear were so rich and varied as to constitute an extremely resonant, complex language that he could use to great advantage; and that Shakespeare would have taken the trouble to learn this language'.

Rebetanz considers such aspects of Lear as the artificiality of its opening, the emphasis on strong individual scenes and emblematic moments (as opposed to narrative continuity and fullness), and the handling of character and motivation in terms of analogies with the contemporary plays of Jonson, Chapman, Marston, Middleton, and so on. In supplying us with this dramatic context Rebetanz is also saving us from what he sees as the lamentable shortsightedness of A. C. Bradley's essay on King Lear is frequently quoted throughout this book, and whose difficulties with the play are attributed to the folk plays of the late nineteenth-century stage and the cultural predominance of the novel.

Although Rebetanz writes of Bradley with sympathy and respect,

it is as inevitable that his approach to the play will be seen to be superior to that (Shakespeare) use of Jacobean traditions and conventions will be shown to surpass that of his contemporaries; hence a certain minority sets in at once and the general shape of his argument becomes predictable.

In detail, however, he has many fresh and interesting things to say about King Lear. I found his discussion of the movement away from chronicle-type narrative in Jacobean plays particularly valuable, as was the treatment of the roles of Kent and Edgar in relation to characters in other plays who assume disguise in order to help reform an errant friend. He is consistently good on the Gloucester subplot even when he is drawing comparisons with such unlikely plays as *Eleazar* and *The Faithful Shepherdess* (the Shakespeare's Edmund, Corin has as both a character and an embodiment of the concept of the 'double'). His handling of the dimension of the play is full and subtle, balancing the lack of narrative continuity in the characters against the difficulty and complexity of the final meaning of the play as a whole.

When it comes to actually seeing good productions of the non-Shakespearean plays, Rebetanz discusses we are hardly less privileged than Bradley was (though our experiences in the theatre should make us better able to imagine such productions), so to look for the effect of Shakespeare's appetite and tastes on the plays by Chapman and Marston and Fletcher from the study of his reworked King Lear.

Ann Thompson

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BOOKS

Making a career

The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy, Volume 1 1840-1892
edited by **Richard Little Purdy** and **Michael Millgate**
Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £12.50
ISBN 0 19 813470 8

Although this is only the first of seven volumes, it contains all Hardy's letters which survive from 1862, when he went up to London to train as an architect, to 1892 when the impact of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* had made him a national and controversial figure. In other words, it covers Hardy's career as a novelist from its earliest formation to the beginning of its final phase.

In terms both of quantity and of what the letters actually reveal, this is a sparse collection. We get very little information about his intellectual development in those crucial years in London when he must have assimilated the radical ideological changes that followed the publication of *The Origin of Species*, and there is not much more sense of the expansion of his social horizons which the move to London and the friendships made in the course of his literary career must have brought about. There is no clue at all about his personal life: nothing is said about the suicide of Horace Moule, for example, and the letters to his first wife tell us nothing about his marriage.

The editors are understandably apologetic about the thinness of the material. They have decided to publish before they are convinced that they have located all the surviving letters because the dispersal of Hardy's literary remains has been so great that to follow up every possibility would have meant an intractable delay. But it seems unlikely that much that is significant will emerge, since, in the first place, there is good reason to suppose that much has been destroyed, and secondly, it is clear that, unlike Henry James, Hardy had neither reason nor inclination to use the letter as a record of impressions and ideas. I think that we ought to be sympathetic and grateful to the editors. The letters of a major novelist ought to be available even when they are not as rewarding as one might have hoped. The only



Portrait of Thomas Hardy.

decision that puzzles me is that they do not reproduce letters intended for publication: they could hardly be more formal than the private letters, and it would have been useful to have had everything in one collection.

This is to talk of the volume as a whole and specifically in the context of Hardy studies. There are occasions which give us discrete insights into Hardy's thinking and these are certainly worth having. The comments about the nature of the material which emerge in correspondence about *Booths* and *Tess*, and thoughts about modernity in his response to Havelock Ellis's review of 1883, offer a glimpse of the serious analysis Hardy applied to contemporary cultural currents. A letter to John Addington Symonds about disestablishment advocates a future secular role for the church as a 'non-theological establishment for the promotion of that virtuous life on which all men are agreed', and this, together with the friendly overtures made to Frederick Harrison suggests that Hardy felt more sympathetic to positivism than one

had realised. There is also a striking appreciation of Manet which indicates a great deal about the effort of his later prose. These insights are valuable because, although they hardly change one's view of Hardy as a radical writer, they do give slightly more access to the mind of this most reticent of writers.

But although I have not mentioned everything which has this kind of interest, it would not take long to provide an exhaustive list, and this hardly justifies the whole, expensive volume. In terms of its interest to students of Hardy, the justification of the volume is merely that everything that is available should be made available. Its role will be largely negative: it will confirm that what we know of Hardy in these years already is not going to be challenged by radically new material.

On the other hand, I think that this volume has a different kind of importance which has less to do with Hardy in particular than with the whole context of literary production in those crucial 30 years when the economics of publishing and the social relations of writer and public underwent such major changes. Many of these letters are to publishers and editors, and we have a very vivid sense of Hardy trying to find a market, trying to get the best deal for his work, threading his way through the intricate maze of international copyright and the legalities of theatrical adaptation. We have a very strong sense of a writer making a career and controlling increasingly the problems of his profession. This can be more than a matter of interesting detail about agreements and remuneration. Thus his attempts to sell his early fiction say a good deal about the way in which he read popular taste, and a letter about the relative inoffensiveness of *The Return of the Native* on the grounds of its remoteness shows an almost ironic determination not to allow the strictures of ideology to repress the intimate honesty of his fiction. This volume may disappoint Hardy students, but for anyone who is concerned with the social relations of literary production, it is an extremely valuable document.

John Goode

The principle of the self

Shelley: A Voice not Understood by **Timothy Webb**
Manchester University Press, £11.95
ISBN 0 7190 0690 2

If Shelley's voice is still not understood, it is probably because his readers know too much rather than too little about him. 'Shelley's reputation was largely created out of factors which had little direct connexion with poetry but that reputation soon transferred itself from the realms of biography, ethics and politics to the realm of literary criticism.' Dr Webb does not attempt to remedy this situation by setting up an absolute distinction between the man and his work. As he shows, those critics who insist on such a distinction must strongly have also been the most unscrupulous in smuggling innuendoes about Shelley the man into their discussion of his poetry.

His own admiration for Shelley's work clearly goes hand in hand with personal respect for the man. Consequently his treatment of the biographical problem in the first chapter consists of a demolition of the mythology that has accumulated around Shelley's name, largely thanks to the bias of early biographers and the prejudices of Victorian (and later) readers. Having cleared away the 'disorientations and castorions of the real Shelley' that have fostered both uncritical admiration and hostile prejudice, Webb proceeds with an exposition of Shelley's views on literature, politics, philosophy and religion, designed to add a full understanding of what Shelley was trying to do as a poet, and hence of the poetry itself. Shelley would not have accepted any distinction between his poetry and his wide-ranging intellectual interests, and Webb con-

sistently emphasises this. In particular the importance and the precise nature of Shelley's religious beliefs, and their intimate connexion with his political concerns, are clearly brought out.

The account of Shelley's work is directed rather to readers of literature in general, than specifically to Shelley scholars, and the merit of this book is to be sound rather than challenging. But even specialists will be stimulated by the illuminating connections made between previously unrelated aspects of Shelley's work.

A good example of this is the use that Webb makes of Shelley's MS notes on Davy's *Elements of Agricultural Chemistry*, in discussing 'The Sensitive Plant' and other late poems which reveal an intense interest in 'the everyday miracles of plant life'. Webb is able to make this kind of connexion between Shelley's poetry and his other interests thanks to his intimate familiarity not only with Shelley's published writings but also with his MSS; again and again a point is tellingly illustrated by reference to a discarded passage or a rough jotted in a notebook.

He is also very aware of the vast range of general information upon which the critic of Shelley must be able to draw: 'There is... behind much of the poetry an easy access of reference to the history of philosophy, scientific discovery, politics ancient and modern, the facts of nature, and almost the whole range of European literature from the Greek and Latin classics through Dante, Calderon and Goethe, including most of English poetry and drama.' They know not the Shelley who only Shelley knew. Webb's previous book on Shelley as a poetic translator demonstrated his command of the necessary linguistic resources; and the present work reveals a confident acquaint-

ance with the other areas of Shelley's intellectual world.

As an authoritative prolegomenon to the study of Shelley this work can hardly be faulted. Its expository nature does, however, ensure certain limitations. Webb's discussion often seems to stop just when the critical issues involved become most interesting. For instance, he is right to argue that Shelley rejected the theory of art as 'poetry' to 'the principle of self', and to support this by showing that many of the supposedly most self-revelatory passages in his poetry are in fact written within the framework of biblical or later literary conventions. But does Shelley's practice always follow his own theoretical distinction? The situation is surely much more complicated. Shelley's concern for the exclusion of the self from poetry rests on his awareness of the insidious power of the 'principle of self' as he had experienced it within himself, a power which his awareness did not necessarily always enable him to resist. In trying to see Shelley plain Webb has been obliged to underplay many of the complexities and ambiguities in his character and work.

A rather more serious limitation is that the concentration on the total shape of Shelley's thought—while this is illustrated by frequent reference to the poetry—precludes a close focus on the individual poems considered as integral works of art. It is commendable to have retained from the all too common practice of replacing the poems by tedious paraphrases; but in his defence of Shelley as a writer Webb has neglected the cause of Shelley the artist, the creator of autonomous wholes. It is to be hoped that he will rectify this omission himself before long.

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